

4 STORIES

MARRYING AN HEIRESS. NOINA. THE BLIND BARONET. THE LADY BEATRICE.III.

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MARRYING AN HEIRESS;

Or, THE FAMILY OF THE DOBBS.

BY B. B. THOM.

It was one of the few fine days in the month of last July, that a splendid cab, drawn by a noble grey horse, was seen passing down one of those sweet rural lanes that are to be found in the neighborhood of one of our chief commercial cities. It stopped in front of a two- storied, small, red-colored house, which displayed between the outside garden door and the porch a number of orange lilies, from the centre of which rose a plaster- of-Paris image of Apollo. Two young gentlemen, dressed in the first style of fashion, dismounted from the cab, and, stopping in the garden to contemplate with astonishment this extraordinary ornament, they rapped at the door, and, upon its being opened, asked if Mr. Egremont was at home.

Egremont!" said the gardener, who on this occasion evidently acted as the valet; u Egremont! gentlemen, you are under a mistake; there is no such person living here. This is Mr. Dobbs'."

Oh! now I think, I do recollect that the name of the father-in-law of our friend Alfred is Dobbs. We are under no mistake; we wish to see the son-in-

law of Mr. Dobbs."

" Ah! yes, yes, the son-in-law; that is the husband of our young mistress. Aye, aye; all right; I 'll go and tell him. You can in the mean time walk in the garden."

" Let him know that there are two of his friends here —Gustavus Mandeville and William Creed.

The gardener disappeared.

"I expected to find a handsome villa," said Mandeville to his companion, " and I find nothing but a shocking vulgar-looking cottage."

" Yes; but you see here," said William Creed, pointing to the garden at the rear of the house, "that this is a very large one, and, as it appears to me, kept in excellent order; although a little too well stocked with vegetables for my taste. But what matters the outside appearance of a house, if the interior is comfortable? Besides, I am quite sure that Egremont's father-in-law is rich."

" So much the better; for Egremont required some secure and snug post after his sad shipwreck; and then I am quite sure, with his ideas of elegance, and his luxurious tastes, that every thing must be put sur un bon pied."

" That I calculate upon. The dashing Egremont, no doubt, employs in a profuse style the fortune made by the thrifty Mr. Dobbs."

" Where are they? Where are my dear friends?" said a third person, who ran from under a shady grove of trees.

It was Alfred Egremont! a fattish, red-faced young man, dressed in a fustian shooting jacket, with white canvas trousers that did not come down to

his ancles, and having on his feet thick hob-nailed shoes; while on his head was a skimping straw hat, and round his neck an old colored cotton handkerchief. His two friends looked at him for an instant, without being able to recognize him; but he said laughingly to them, and shaking their hands—

You find me a little changed, perhaps. The air of the fields, and the peace of a happy home, have produced these good results. I, who was so thin and so pale, am now stout and blooming. The country has given me a complexion, and happiness has thickened my waist; then I have shaved away my whiskers, because my wife docs not like them; and I have cropped my head until it looks like that of a recruit, instead of wearing my hair like a German, because my beloved mother-in-law could not endure the sight of it. Besides I have given up all notion of fashion. It is very well in the city, or when one is unmarried; but when we live in the country, and only wish to please ourselves, and to be perfectly at our ease, why then one dresses as they like—as I do. So, you see, the metamorphosis is perfect"

And so in fact it was. There was a time, when the most elegantly dressed man, with the handsomest turn out, with the finest house, and the most excellent wine- cellar in the city, was Alfred Egremont; but then, one morning—it was. a lovely morning, and followed that on which a great race was won—Alfred Egremont was completely, utterly, irretrievably ruined. But, in the midst of all his misfortunes, one plank of safety presented itself, and, clinging to that, he might reach the shore in safety. The brilliant position and shining attractions of the young exquisite had made a deep impression upon the heart of Tabitha Dobbs, the daughter of the richest green-grocer in the city. Mr. and Mrs. Dobbs were pains-taking, saving, griping, calculating shopkeepers, who had an utter abomination for fashion and all its luxuries; and they, therefore, at first, declared their decided objection to a union between Mr. Alfred Egremont and their beloved daughter, Tabitha. The young lady was, however, their only child; and they yielded at length to her wishes. Besides, Alfred promised to reform, and they were resolved he

should keep his word. He determined to give up his house, and to live altogether in the country, with his father-in-law.

From the time of his marriage Alfred appeared no more in the city; and it was remarked, that not one of his intimate friends had been invited to his nuptials. People only knew of the happiness he was enjoying by report. He had, however, written several times to his friends, Mandeville and Creed, and requested them to come and see him. They at length determined upon paying him a visit; they did so one day when ennui had awakened in their hearts the remembrance of their old friend, and the desire for some new amusement

"As to you," continued Alfred, "I find you the same as ever. Nothing is changed about you, unless it be the cut of your coat, the make of your waistcoat, and the tie of your cravat. Besides you are as young, as handsome, and as fine as ever you were. It is the privilege of bachelors. But now, tell me truly, are you not getting tired of the excited life you are leading. Believe me, for I speak from experience, true happiness does not consist in the bustle of a club, nor the noise of a racecourse, nor the excitement of a sailing-match; and then there is the terrible moment when all those ruinous pleasures and wasteful prodigalities must end. It is not every one who has the same good luck as I have. Look then to your affairs in time, and economise before it be too late. I hope that the example and the sight of my happiness will determine you."

"Then are you really very happy?" enquired Mandeville.

"Why should I not be so? I have a wife that adores me; for she married me, notwithstanding my want of means, and when she might have looked for a millionaire. My father-in-law is an excellent fellow; and as to my mother-in-law, she is the tenderest creature living; and, besides this, thirty thousand a year in the funds— what can a man desire more?"

"How! had your wife thirty thousand a year fortune?"

"No, no, not exactly; but that is what my father-in-law is worth, and I enjoy it. There was no settlement made on my wife at our marriage, as I had no property of my own; but then all that he has we have all in common; and we live in a perfect state of harmony. Ours is indeed a blessed family of love."

"But, then, do you pass all the year in this country-house?"

"Oh! not at all. During four or five months, at the winter season, we remove to the city."

"The Misses is calling for you," said the gardener, who this moment stepped up to Alfred.

"Indeed, my good friend," said Mr. Creed, "your gardener appears to be an oddity. He cultivates his flowers and trains his plants admirably; but I have not so good an opinion of his politeness or his comprehension. But a few minutes since, when we asked to see Mr. Egremont, he did not appear to understand us."

"That is by no means astonishing," replied Egremont, a little embarrassed; "for they scarcely know me here by that name; the family never call me anything but Alfred; and then I must tell you, that my father-in-law has a particular veneration for the name of Dobbs. He himself has made it illustrious upon 'change. He is, therefore, justly proud of it, and wishes to transmit it to his grandchildren—when he has them. I therefore have yielded to his wishes on that trifling point, and I have added my wife's name to my own, and, therefore, I always now sign my letters, Alfred Egremont Dobbs."

"That is it—and the Dobbs, that has money, crushes down the Egremont, that is without it"

" Yes; but I would not at all have yielded the point if my father-in-law had a son. But one may well consent to make their name a little longer, when they marry an only daughter and a rich heiress."

"No doubt; money commands everything. But talking of money reminds me that I have a trifle to give you. Our friend Ronayne has just come in for his property. The large fortune he has inherited has sharpened his memory, and he is paying off his old debts. Knowing, then, that we were coming to see you, he desired us to give you a hundred dollars; that being the sum you lent him when he wanted it, and you did not care to lose it Here they are."

" That is very good indeed," observed Alfred; " give them to me." And as he dropped them into his fob he whispered to his friends, "You need not say anything about this either to my wife or her father and mother."

"I understand you. You wish to keep the money for yourself alone; and not to throw it into the common stock, in which you all participate."

" Precisely so; but now go and wait for me in the drawing-room, whilst I hasten to my wife. I shall not be a moment away from you."

The aspect of this room was far from corresponding with the notion that the two friends had formed of the comfort and luxuries that would be introduced by Alfred into the house of his father. The room was covered with a carpet that was much too small for it; the chairs were all wrapped up in dark cotton; the same thing was upon the sofas. Upon the chimney-slab were some old physic bottles, half-filled with water, and into which had been driven the ends of some withered flowers. The mirror was papered up, and on an old brass-rimmed clock were three miserable birds impaled. While the two friends were examining this chamber they heard the murmuring noise of an angry discussion in the room over-head, and in that debate the voice of Alfred could scarcely be heard. " Poor fellow," said the friends, " we fear we have done you no service by coming here. They are finding fault with you

for our visit."

In an instant after the family appeared; and the faces that had been lately frowning with rage, were rendered frightful by imitating, most vilely, a smile of satisfaction. Alfred, however, plucked up some of his former courage and went through the ceremony of introducing his wife and her relations with some of his wonted ease and grace. When the parties had saluted each other, he said aside to his friends—

" Well; what do you think of Mrs. Egremont?"

" Why—very well."

" She is not exactly beautiful," he added; " but then

she has good teeth. There is thought in her eyes, and a grace in her smile. And then she is so accomplished; so full of talent; there it is that she shines. But you shall hear her sing."

Mr. Dobbs reproached his son-in-law on the impropriety and vulgarity of " whispering in company," and then the conversation became general. The old greengrocer railed against the fashionable world, and he told the company what had been the price of the six-per- cents. every week for the three preceding years.

" These things are his hobby," said Alfred ; "you must pardon him his sarcastic humor and his conversation. It is that of an old shopkeeper, who has gone upon 'change, and acquired an immense fortune, with great honor to himself."

Mrs. Dobbs echoed all the observations of her husband, and Mrs. Egremont threw out several piquant observations, which seemed to be particularly intended for the benefit of all spend-thrift dandies. As to the mother-in- law,

she glared upon Alfred like a wild cat, when she said—

"Have you done what I desired you this morning'?"

"Yes, my dear mother," replied Alfred with extreme meekness.

"Why don't you answer me?" said Mrs. Dobbs; "but it is your usual careless way."

"Pardon me, I was speaking to those gentlemen," replied Alfred, happy in being able to think he had so good an excuse.

"What shall we do until dinner is dressed 1" observed Mr. Dobbs.

"Well, well," chimed in Tabitha, "I never did see such a man. You never have a word to throw to a dog. You sit there like a fool. It is for you to answer papa's question. You ought to know the taste of these gentlemen—of your friends."

"Pardon me, my dearest angel, I was just thinking—I believe we shall take a walk in the neighborhood."

"In the neighborhood, indeed!" said Mr. Dobbs.

"Only just listen! as if my grounds were not large enough for him. We will go first to the piggery, and then into the kitchen-garden, and then we shall look at my pond, where there are some fine eels, and fifteen golden fish, and then we will take a walk into the orchard—"

"And then into the paddock," said Alfred.

"Well, if I ever heard the like! The paddock he calls it. Would the word park bum your tongue, my hopeful son-in-law."

"Fes, you are right; I ought to have said park," humbly replied Alfred.

They set out for their promenade.

"Alfred, shut all the windows, and close the door after us," said Mr. Dobbs.

" Alfred, run and fetch Juno," said the mother-in-law.

"Alfred, bring me my parasol, my scarf, and my reticule," said Tabitha."

Alfred executed all these commissions with the quickness of a man who was well accustomed to them.

"These are very good people," said he to his old acquaintances; "very good people indeed. I do for them just as they do for me. They overwhelm me with their little cares, and I good naturedly bear them."

During the walk Alfred was frequently called upon to do something for his wife or her family. On their return they had dinner, which was at the same time shabby, and yet aping what is fashionable. It was half cold, and half burnt Alfred was two or three times invited to stand up and change the plates, or fill the glasses. Mr. Dobbs, from the moment that soup was placed before him, until the dessert was removed, never stopped talking.

" I think I shall smoke a cigar in the garden," said Creed to his friend Alfred.

" Smoke! Oh, don't think of it, my dear fellow; the cigar is a thing proscribed in this abode."

" Well, then, a little farther off—in the park, as Mr. Dobbs calls it?"

"No, no; for if there was the slightest smell of it, my wife or my mother-in-

law would nose it out Besides, we expect company; neighbors, who are coming to pass the evening with us; and we shall have a great deal of amusement; for my wife is going to play on the piano. Listen!"

There was no doubt that there was playing on the piano ; for the instrument groaned under the heavy fingers of Tabitha, who played in an inexplicable manner some most difficult pieces. Then, yielding to the request of her mother, Mrs. Egremont sung three of the most favorite airs of Grisi, and gave them with the most astonishing quavers, and almost incredible flourishes. Every time she stopped, Alfred was the first to applaud.

The visitors arrived during the concert; and at its conclusion Mr. Dobbs proposed they should play loo at a halfpenny a fish.

" It is quite impossible," answered in the one breath Creed and Mandeville; " for we must now leave you. It will be some time advanced in the night before we can reach the city."

"What!" cried Alfred, "don't you intend to sleep here 1 Only think that—"

But a look, like that of a basilisk, from Mrs. Dobbs, fascinated Alfred in the midst of his burst of hospitality and friendship. He stopped, and assisted his friends into the vehicle that had conveyed them from town.

"You have," said he, "been the eye-witnesses of my domestic happiness; and may you profit by my example!"

"Oh, yes," they replied, "it is an excellent lesson for us." The cab started off at a gallop.

" How admirably your horse goes!" said Mandeville to Creed.

" Do you wish to buy him?" replied Creed.

" What, are you thinking of parting with him?"

" Yes; I have been thinking very seriously about myself, and I am about to reduce my expenses."

"And I have been thinking of doing the same."

" That which we have seen this evening has induced you to do so. Is it not so?"

"Yes. Poor Alfred! What a life! But this is the end of the follies of youth. I have seen break-downs in the world. I saw Stanley abandon his name, and enlist as a common soldier; and yet it did not make me reflect I saw Williams blow out his brains; and yet I have gone on fearlessly; but the example of Alfred has made a complete convert of me. I certainly do not wish to expose 'myself to the chance of a similar fate. I certainly will not ruin myself"

" Nor I, either."

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NOINA.

Ella of Wyoming.

When we admire a spot for its beauty, or love it for the associations of the past which cluster around it, we are prone to shed over even its trivial incidents a glory borrowed from the intensity of our own feelings; and are hence surprised that others gaze, with coldness or contempt, upon the objects of our deep enthusiasm. It may be thus perchance with this little

tale, that has come whispering downward on the breezes of tradition, like the first echo of some far-off melody.

We must go backward far—years before even the Genoese had dreamed of that new world, which was to immortalize his name, and man's ingratitude,

" it was summer in Wyoming but, then were there no golden seas of grain, rolling in mimic waves beneath the breezes that swept down from her mountains—no broad belts of green pasture land stretching, as now, far away into the dense forest, like civilization pressing with swift foot upon barbarism. All was one continuous waste of trees upon the mountain, and trees upon the plain; save where the silvery Susquehanna wound, gleaming in the sunlight, and sending back a free, broad smile to the Day God's wooing. The valley, even then, in its pristine wildness, presented a landscape of no ordinary character,—with its graceful regularity of form, as if chiselled out with exquisite skill from the mountains that sweep around it—its universal green, relieved, and brilliantly adorned by the clear stream, that sparkled onward in its serpentine course through the very centre, receiving at times a brawling tributary that dashed down from the hills to meet her, and at times parting her waters to encircle some fairy islet, that gleamed like an emerald in its rich setting.

It was when the wild hunter still roamed, the tenant of nature, over this lovely spot, in the brightest season of the year, that a bold young chieftain erected his wigwam, and led to it in triumph, the lovely Noina— the flower of the valley—his Indian bride. She was the admiration of the whole tribe of the Shawnees, and the enamored bridegroom, as he first gazed upon her in her new home, her dark eyes sparkling with happiness, felt a joy such as only those who have felt such emotions can describe. The happy pair chose, for their future abode, a lone romantic spot, near where the river first breaks into the valley, and far above the villages of their tribe, as if they wanted to fly from the gross sensuality that reigned there; and find a holier society in nature, and their own pure hearts. They dwelt upon a narrow strip

of lowland, between the mountains and the stream; across the latter, directly opposite their wigwam, rose bold, and broad, and high, a perpendicular ledge of rocks,

as if it were the remnant of some giant wall, that had in former ages guarded that little valley, until the noble river had come down in her might, and cloven it at a blow. Here they lived; the gentle stream murmured at their feet its song of peace, but the bleak crag frowned gloomily beyond; they listened to the soothing, and heeded not the frown. They were nature's free children, happy in all the enthusiasm of youthful love.

One morn, when yellow autumn was first beginning to blight the glory of summer, the hunter went forth in search of game. Noina gazed after him as he crossed the stream; he bounded lightly from his canoe into the forest, and soon disappeared. The morning passed away, the sun rose proudly to his meridian, and then turned upon his journey downward to the west, and yet the hunter returned not. His young bride, impatient of so long a stay, seated herself upon the bank, and turned an anxious eye upon the opposite shore; all there was silent as the tomb; and the first cloud of apprehension rose, she knew not why, over the clear sunshine of her spirit —she looked upward, and the precipice seemed to be scowling upon her. She turned away in terror. Suddenly a loud and furious growl of rage and agony, coming, as it were, from the very air, broke upon the oppressive silence. Instinctively she cast a startled glance upon the spot from which she had just turned away. Her eyes, wildly opened, and fixed in speechless horror upon it; her lips were parted, as if an unutterable shriek of woe had died upon them; for there, upon the very edge of the cliff, is the husband of her love, in deadly conflict with one of the fiercest animals of the American forest—the panther. The beast, wounded, and stung to madness by the pain, has turned in fury on his assailant. The struggle is a hard one. The hunter is strong and brave, his eye quails not he utters no cry; though the fangs of the beast are deep in his flesh. He strives to raise his weapon, but the muscles have been literally torn from his arm, and his strokes are powerless. He feels his

strength each moment lessening, as lessens the distance between them and the precipice. They are upon the very verge—one final, frantic struggle; despair nerved his mangled limbs; he springs wildly backward, but, held in the bloody grasp of the panther, the impulse served but to raise him an instant from the rock; and the next, with a curve, and then a fearful plunge, down they are hurled—with a loud yell from the beast, but the heroic Indian is dumb down—down, a piercing shriek rends the air, the pent up anguish finds for a moment vent; and the next, the bride lay senseless on the ground.

When she awoke, darkness was upon the earth. She thought that she had been long asleep, and had dreamed some horrible dream; the forms, which flitted through memory's magic chamber, were vague and shadowy, but, all were terrible. She turned for her husband, he was not by her side; she called upon him—no answer, but the echo came upon her ear. She arose, and groped about. Alas, her soul was as dark as the sky above her, and her reason and memory as wavering as were her footsteps in the gloom. The poor girl was crazed. She wandered about all that night She wandered for days, still calling piteously upon her husband, and chiding him for his long delay. The hunter, as he pursued his game in the forest, often met her, with abstracted eye, scanning the whole horizon, as if looking anxiously for the coming of some one from afar; and dropped a tear of sympathy for the poor girl's wretchedness. At length, one day, she came, by accident, upon the very spot of that bloody contest Deep stains were upon the rock; she paused, seemed for a moment lost in thought, and then, as if a burning light had at once broke in upon her brain, she pressed her hands convulsively upon her brow, shrieked plxrenziedly, u have 1 found you, my love 1 I have searched long, and you have called, and called, and chided me for my delay! But I have found you now, and, I come, I come!" She sprang wildly far over the rock, and sank a shattered corpse down the deep gorge where her husband had perished—and the dark brown lovers were in death again united.

Ella.



THE BLIND BARONET.

by H. SIMMES.

"Mi good Saunders," said Miss Sarah King, at the moment of mounting her carriage, "I recommend your master particularly to your care; and during my short absence, I confide him to your long-tried devotion and affection. I ask from you, for him, care that will be ever attentive, delicate, patient, enduring, full of thought—in short, the care as if of a woman. Always remember that Sir Richard Ellington is deprived of sight, and that our eyes ought to obey his thoughts, as his own eyes formerly did."

"My dear Sarah," said Sir Richard, pressing with affection the hands of his young lady, "Saunders will endeavor to imitate the example you have given him, and he will show himself, you may rest assured of it, the most attentive as well as faithful of guardians during your absence. Go, then, and go without inquietude."

"I must depart, Richard; but to part from you without inquietude, that is impossible, for you know not all that—"

"I know," resumed Sir Richard, interrupting her, "that you are an angel of goodness and patience. I know that you are young, rich, and full of intellect, have come to bury yourself in a solitude; and that you have wished to pass the prime of your life in the society of a blind man, that his infirmity makes sullen and morose. All this I know perfectly well; but, then, I do not know how to pay the deep debt of gratitude that I owe you. Gratitude is but a cold feeling; and love it is impossible. Why do you disdain the love of a blind man
1"

" Reflect on that which it is becoming in me to do," replied the lady. " Do you wish to force me to repeat to you the fact—that I am ugly."

" I cannot and will not believe it, my dear Sarah. I am certain that you slander yourself. It is the feelings of the heart that cast a light upon the countenance, and therefore you must be most beautiful."

" And you are blind who say this, dear Richard. Ah! if it were possible, that in your single glance you could embrace the entire universe, and that I alone, like an invisible fairy, might love you; but a truce to this, it grows late, and I must be on my journey. Adieu! then, I shall be back in less than eight days. Meanwhile, give me the benefit of your infirmity, and do not see me in your imagination as being too ugly. Again, and again, adieu! Saunders, as to you, do not forget."

The horses started off at a gallop, and when the rolling of the wheels was no longer heard. Sir Richard grasped the arm of Saunders with a vivacity and emotion that made the old servant tremble.

" Run, Saunders," said he, " run for the Doctor. He is prepared, and only waits to be sent for."

Saunders quitted the house in haste, and in a quarter of an hour he returned with the Doctor.

" I am ready to undergo the operation of which you have already spoken to me, sir," said the patient, " and you will therefore be so good as to begin it at once."

" There may," answered the Doctor, " be two means adopted for the purpose of restoring you to your sight. The first consists in an operation that is very simple, and of the success of which, I entertain the strongest

confidence. In the event that my expectation should be foiled, then there is another mode of treatment to be adopted: it is more tedious, more difficult, more dangerous, perhaps, but the ultimate cure, in such cases as yours, is beyond a doubt."

« Try, then, your first method, Doctor, and all I hope is, that it may be as successful as you wish it."

The Doctor took his instruments, and at the end of ten minutes the operation was over. The Doctor said that he had the best hopes, and that he should return at the end of three days, to remove the dressing. In grasping his hand, the baronet placed in it a hundred pound note, and then sat himself down to pass over these three days of expectation as patiently as he possibly could. But when the moment arrived at which his fate was to be decided, his anxiety increased to such a degree, as to be no longer endurable. At one moment the patient fancied he could see the pale reflection of a ray of light, that was obscured by the superincumbent bandages; and at another that there was only before his eyes those mote-filled glares that are the incessant illusions of a gaze that is lost in profound obscurity. In vain he sought, he struggled to be calm. His hand agitated by a convulsive movement, applied itself to the dressing. Soon reason was overcome —the knot was untied—the bandages fell to the earth. Alas! profound night covered with its dark and dismal veil the sight of the blind man!

He leant his head upon his breast. He closed his eye-lids, a useless protection given by Nature to such as he, and then the tears coursed each other continuously, but slowly down his cheeks. But soon he felt ashamed of his womanly weakness. He slowly raised his head and the lids opened, when oh ! inexpressible happiness! —an ardent, strongly-colored ray of light, penetrated even to his very brain. It was a ray of the blessed light from a glorious sun of June, that had crept through the crevices of the double blinds, that reached his sight. - He stood up greatly agitated; and in the dim

obscurity of the apartment he was able to recognise many objects well-known to his touch. At first he saw them but confusedly; and afterward in a more distinct manner.

At the same instant the noise of a carriage told him of the approach of his preserver. He rushed forward to meet him, and exclaimed with enthusiastic joy, " I see, Doctor, I see!"

The folding doors were quickly opened; it was Sarah who had returned. She was—truth must be told—ugly. Her features, that had formerly been beautiful, were disfigured by a frightful scar, which appeared to divide the forehead, and extended all along one of her cheeks. And yet there was, in the softness of the melancholy that characterised her features, a touching grace. In her look there was benevolence and mind, combined with great talent. In the eyes of Sir Richard Ellington she was truly beautiful, for if he had recovered his sight—his love had still continued blind as ever. Dazzled by the stream of light that inundated the apartment, he remained without movement and without voice. On the other hand Sarah, with the true instinct of love, comprehended at a glance all that had passed in her absence.

" You see, Richard," she cried, " you see, I am certain of it, and all my happiness is destroyed."

" Why, dearest Sarah, should your happiness be destroyed?"

" Because I now must no longer be the object of your love—because I am now about to separate from you for ever."

" Separate! You and I to separate! You to separate from me—you! and wherefore?"

" I have long since told you, Richard, that the day on which you should

recover your sight must be also that of our separation. I love you, and you are perfectly conscious of it—for I have never attempted to conceal the weakness of my heart I know, too, yours. It is ardent—it is generous; and from generosity,—from a feeling of duty, perhaps, you would insist on marrying me; and if I should accede to the proposal, acting under the influence of a sentiment that I do not pretend to disguise, I must do that which I know would cause the misery of my life. I wish not at all to afflict you by calling to mind the remembrance of your first wife. Death has separated you from her; but remember that Arabella was a most beautiful creature—that she doted on you, but still your affections were not always hers. How, then, could I, with this countenance, expect to find you more constant to me? I shall not attempt that which I know to be impossible; but in the retreat in which I am now about to bury myself for life, I will carry with me the sweet memory of the happiest epoch of my life. Farewell, my dearest Richard. I bless Heaven that it has afflicted me, in accomplishing your dearest wishes. When I shall be no longer near you, preserve in your memory the remembrance of my devotion, and forget, if you can, the miserable image that my features must present to you."

" Since it must be thus," replied Sir Richard, " I shall not detain you but—until I have recovered my sight In the meanwhile you may remain; for I am still blind. I now see no more."

" Do not hope to deceive me, for you cannot do so," she answered with a bitter smile.

Sir Richard had not time to answer her, for the Doctor, running up to him, exclaimed—

" Madman I why did you remove the dressing. Is it that you wish to make your blindness incurable; but, no, no," said he, examining Sir Richard's eyes, " no— Heaven be praised, your eyes are quite healthy, your look is steady—you do see; the cure is complete. Quick, quick, let us put on the bandage

again."

"Wait one moment, Doctor," observed Sir Richard. "What will you say when I tell you, that I am now just as blind, as I was before."

"I would then say, that ray own studies, my own eyes, and all my past experience, had gone for nothing—but it cannot, I say, it cannot be."

"Very well, then, Doctor, I say to you, that your studies, your eyes, and your experience have misled you; I do not see at all."

"Can it be true?" said the Doctor, in amazement, while Sarah smiled incredulously.

"Perfectly true," answered Sir Richard, quite calmly.

"I have seen just two instances of this in all my life, for they are exceedingly rare," remarked the Doctor, in a perfect consternation. "Then me must try another mode of treatment Are you disposed to. undergo a new operation?"

"Exceedingly well disposed, and quite ready for it," answered the patient

The Doctor took out his instruments, and asked for linen, that he might make ready a bandage.

"Stop!" exclaimed the lady, "stop, I say; Sir Richard sees perfectly well, although he does not like to admit it"

"This is no child's play," observed the Doctor very gravely. "I must tell you, that the mode of treatment which I am now about to employ, is one that may restore sight to one actually blind, but that would inevitably render blind one who has his sight"

"Go on, Doctor, go on," was the observation of the gentleman, "for I unfortunately have nothing to risk in that way."

The bandage was prepared, and already there was flashing in the hand of the Doctor the shining blade of a bistouri; when Sarah, who, up to that moment, had been in a species of stupor, recovered from it, to throw herself in the arms of her lover.

"My beloved Richard," she said, "my senses do not deceive me; you see, and I am perfectly sure of the fact. Look, Doctor, how clear and serene are his eyes. They have none of that fixity which is to be noticed in the eyes of the blind. Richard, your glances now rest upon me; there are in them the tokens of the deepest affection. Oh, say, then, that you see us. I entreat—I supplicate you to do so. Say it, and I will remain—I will never quit you; but let there be no new operation—let these hateful instruments be removed. But do not—oh! do not punish me so cruelly, for having preferred your peace of mind to your wishes. Doctor, do not attempt to approach him. I do not wish it—do not believe him."

The violence of the emotions that agitated her did not permit her to proceed further; for she fainted at the very instant that she saw the Doctor about to bring the instrument close to the eyes of Sir Richard.

Poor, heart-broken Sarah was carried out of the room in a state of insensibility, and the Doctor who, by a wink from his patient, found he had been tricked, put back his instruments, threw away the bandages he had prepared, and took up his hat

"My good friend," said Sir Richard, "you have, without intending it, done me very considerable service, and, forwarded my schemes completely. You will, I am sure, pardon me my ruse when you know the motive for it Miss Sarah King wished to part from me. She has a very exaggerated idea of her own ugliness. She believes she cannot be seen without being disliked; and it

was therefore necessary that I should not see her. I candidly own to you that I should have regretted my cure if I were to purchase it with the loss of Sarah. Her love is more necessary to my existence than my sight."

As he uttered these words, he extended his hand to the Doctor; but the latter, taking up a bandage, made a sign for him to seat himself.

"Is peace made between us?" was the question of the patient to the physician.

"I have never been in love," drily answered the Doctor; " but then I have, in my time, met with a great many fools."

For eight days he was in constant attendance on Sir Richard, and on the ninth he entered the apartment at an early hour.

" Now," said he, " that you are in a state of health, that you cannot destroy it by imprudence, I leave you. You may say, if you please, that you are blind; but I shall have nothing to do with it, when the fact is that you see a great deal better than I can."

" Farewell, then. Doctor, I hope you have no bad feeling toward me."

" There is one thing, Sir Richard, that I can never pardon you, and that is your having deceived for one moment, an experience that, up to your time, I believed to be infallible."

" The great man falls seven times a day, Doctor."

"Yes, but if I had persisted in my error—if I had operated upon you?"

"What then? when I have already said that I had much rather lose my sight than be deprived of the society of Sarah."

" But my reputation, Sir Richard."

" Ay, but my love, Doctor."

"The douce take all love!" exclaimed the Doctor, really

vexed; " for that I find is with you a malady that is really incurable."

The worthy Baronet was still laughing at this saying of the Doctor, when Sarah, greatly agitated, ran into the room.

" The Doctor," she remarked, " has gone away in a furious passion. What can have happened between you?"

" He says he will have nothing more to do with my case."

" Ah! then he abandons you, and gives up all hope of restoring you to your sight."

" He says he will have nothing more to do with my eyes."

" Then you are to remain blind."

" Yes, for ever blind to your defects."

" Oh ! then Richard, I must see for both."

A month after this conversation, Miss Sarah King guided within the walls of the church Sir Richard Elrington, who permitted himself to be led there with all the care and caution that is generally taken of a blind man. Every one was astonished, as they looked at his large, bright blue eyes, so clear in appearance, and so intelligent, that they should be deprived of sight. This,

however, must be remarked, that the constant love that Sir Richard showed for his wife for two years after their marriage, prevented her from suspecting the truth.

It was about the termination of the second year of their marriage that they were taking a walk in some fields adjoining the splendid demesne of Sir Richard, that he had never quitted from the time of his being united to the object of his love, when they found that they had incautiously placed themselves near to a furious bull. The wicked animal, attracted by the scarlet scarf of the lady, began to bellow, and tear up the earth with his horns. The danger was imminent, and retreat impossible. Already was the bull making a dash at the lady, when her husband tearing from her her scarf, attracted the animal by waving it toward himself. The bull made a furious and desperate rush upon him, but he adroitly bounded on one side, and having luckily a sharp gardening knife in his pocket, he unclasped it while the bull was coming on, and with the skill of a Spanish toreador, he struck the animal in the spine, and stretched it dead at his feet.

The wife of the Baronet, Lady Elrington, regarded the struggle made by her husband with equal fear and astonishment. In an instant all the secret of the past was revealed to her, and she flung herself into his arms, exclaiming—

"Oh! Richard, Richard, you have deceived me."

"No, my dearest I have not deceived you," was his answer; "for I said I would love you—I do love you, and will for ever love you."

☆

THE LADY BEATRICE.

by Mrs. Mary T. Spencer.

Concluded from page 64.

CHAPTER III.

At the hour of midnight, two individuals, closely muffled in large cloaks, might have been seen stealing down the huge staircase of the palace occupied by the Duke Vivaldo. One of the two walked with a hurried and trembling step, and was so agitated that she was forced to lean on her companion for support. The other appeared to be more firm, and, as they walked, cheered her companion by her words.

" Courage, courage, dear lady," she whispered, " the man whom I have bribed to let us out will not betray us, for he has golden ducats enough to place him far beyond the reach of the Duke's rage, and to support him for many a year in the country to which he will go. Courage then, courage—there is no danger of detection —we are now almost at the gateway—the Signor is waiting without, and in five minutes we shall be on the canal, skimming away from Venice."

The Lady Beatrice, for our readers have by this time guessed that she was the companion of the garrulous nurse, made no reply to these words, except by hurrying on still faster, through the great hall at which they had now arrived. Her step was still trembling, and became more so as they advanced into the hall. At length she whispered tremulously,

" What if my uncle should be coming home."

" Fear not, lady," said her nurse, " he has gone to the ball at the Ducal Palace, and will not return until four in the morning. His servants are asleep or out on the canal, and the palace, as you see, is almost deserted. It will be daybreak, aye! high noon, before our absence will be discovered; and by that time we shall be far on our journey to Rome. Courage, now, dear lady, we are - at the portal. Play your part, and fear not I will play mine."

" Ab, Mistress Japona," said the sleepy porter, arousing himself as the nurse shook him, and demanded to be let out, " whither so late at night, and who have you here? —a fair wench, I dare swear, and for no good are you going forth. Prythee, pretty mistress," he continued, addressing Beatrice, "are you of the household or not? for, if you be, I must e'en have a kiss for toll. By St Mark you must be a sweet morsel, else you would not muffle your face so closely. Mistress Japona may go free, but you must pay for both," and, laughing at what he thought his wit, he advanced to Beatrice.

"Stop, Master Mark," said the nurse, interposing betwixt the two, " this damsel is a visiter of mine and wants none of your gallantry. You know how the Duke sent for me to-day, and I will leave to-morrow if my acquaintance are to be subjected to your insults. I trow your place would not be worth a fig if I were to report this to the Duke. Back, I say, and let us pass."

Awed by her manner, and by the tone of authority in which she spoke, the porter hesitated; and then, bursting into a laugh, he said,

" Tut—Mistress Japona, you take my jest in earnest.

I am here to watch the gate, and have a lonely task of it as you know. It were some comfort if I might be cheered by the sight of a pretty face, but'since you choose to refuse, I must submit," and he shrugged his shoulders, " so, in God's name, pass."

During this colloquy Beatrice had been so agitated as scarcely to be able to stand, and had she not leaned on the nurse must have fallen. When, therefore, the porter opened the gate, her strength would scarcely permit her to pass. The nurse, however, hurried her forward, supporting her so as to attract as little notice as possible, and in a minute they stood without the building, and heard the heavy portal clanging to behind them.

"Thank heaven," was the exclamation of the nurse, for, bold as had been the front she assumed, she had not been without a portion of the fear of discovery which had infected Beatrice. Her companion's heart was too full to speak; but she lifted her eyes to heaven in mute thanksgiving.

"This way—this way, dear lady," said the nurse, after the pause of a moment had partially recruited the strength of Beatrice, "I see a gondola awaiting us, a few doors distant The Signor is there awaiting us."

With hurried steps the two females hastened onward, and were soon beside the gondola. But the lover of Beatrice did not, as they expected, spring forward to meet them. The nurse paused, looked around, and then again advanced to the gondola. Still the Signor did not appear. At the same moment a gay party emerged from a door beside them, and they had just time to shrink back into the shadow of a wall, before the group passed laughingly to the gondola, took their seats, and were propelled in the light fabric down the canal. Their mistake was now evident to the nurse and Beatrice. The Signor was not at the appointed rendezvous. For a moment each thought they had mistaken the time, but the loud chime of the cathedral clock, striking the hour of midnight, soon dispelled this belief. As the chimes died on the air, Beatrice and her companion looked into each others faces, with feelings of disappointment, agony, and terror, such as no pen can describe.

"This is singular," at length said the nurse, "I cannot believe that the Signor is not here. What can have happened?"

"Oh!" said Beatrice, "he has been waylaid—you know that assassins swarm in Venice. Holy mother!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands, and raising her eyes to heaven, "if he is still alive protect him, as well as us; and guide us, oh! thou intercessor for our sins, in this fearful strait!"

"No, it cannot be," said the nurse, perceiving too late the agony she had

inflicted by her remark " the Signor yet lives, believe me, and has only been prevented by some accident from joining us. He will be here yet."

" Let us then await him here," said Beatrice, glad to catch at any words of encouragement, " it cannot be long that he will delay us."

" Would that we could await him here, dear lady, but I fear that we should soon be noticed, and perhaps by some one who would detect our disguise."

" Yet where can we go?" said Beatrice enquiringly.

" Our Lady of Loretto only knows," answered the nurse, " but stay, here comes a gondola—see it makes for this spot—there, there, heaven be praised it stops!"

In the excitement of the moment the nurse rushed forward, fully expecting to see the Signor leap from the gondola. The same hope made the heart of Beatrice beat faster, although her maiden delicacy kept her from advancing. Both were destined to be sadly disappointed. Instead of the Signor a gondolier sprang from the light boat, and advanced toward the ladies. Beatrice shrank back in terror; but the nurse maintained her ground, wondering in despite of her anxiety, where the strange adventures of the night would terminate. With a low bow the gondolier approached, and said,

" I look on the Lady Beatrice and her attendant"

He paused, as if awaiting an answer, while Beatrice clung in alarm to the arm of the nurse.

" You seem to know us," said the nurse, recognizing, at a glance, the serving man of Beatrice's lover, and turning to her young lady, she whispered " cheer up, dear mistress, this is the Signor's attendant—he brings us good news I know," and then, again addressing the gondolier, she asked, " what

message does your master send?"

" My master appointed to meet me at the Rialto a full hour since, there to proceed with him here to take up the Lady Beatrice and her attendant I waited until midnight, but the Signor did not come. Thinking, perhaps, that he had altered his mind and come here alone, I proceeded hither. You have not, as I begin to fear, seen him."

" No—no—mother of God ! what evil can have befallen him 1"

" Alas! I fear he has been assassinated," answered the gondolier, " nothing but death would have made him break his promise to you—"

"Help! help!" said the nurse, interrupting him, " my mistress is fainting. Oh! you have killed her."

The gondolier had but just time to spring forward and catch the falling form of Beatrice to prevent it from sinking on the pavement, when lights were seen flashing in the distance, and shouts were heard as of parties approaching. The nurse and the serving man looked at each other in dismay. What was to be done? The torches and the group they lighted were rapidly approaching. It would never do for the Lady Beatrice to be detected at this hour in the street and fainting. Such a discovery would entail on her the severest tyranny of the uncle to whom it would again consign her. In this emergency the nurse was the most quick-witted.

" To the gondola with her," she exclaimed hurriedly, " bear her to the gondola—there, that will do," and taking a place beside her inanimate mistress, she continued, " I will close the blinds, only you ply the oar quick and bear us from the city—to what place we care not now. There is no safety longer for us in Venice— our danger cannot be increased no matter whither we fly."

The gondolier sprang to his place, and with a few dexterous turns of his oar, sent the light boat skimming down the canal, never relaxing the efforts of his brawny arm until they had emerged on the open lagoon, and were leaving the city behind them. At length the nurse looked out and enquired in what direction he was proceeding, saying that her mistress had recovered from her swoon, and was anxious to know. The gondolier hastened to allay the fears of the trembling girl by informing her that he was carrying them to the place where his master had secured horses, and that his plan was, if the Signor was not there to meet them, to see the ladies a few furlongs on their way to Rome, or until he could procure them an escort, when he would return in order to seek out his master. With this account the nurse, in a measure, soothed the alarmed delicacy of the Lady Beatrice.

We will not describe the renewed agony of all parties when, on arriving at the depot for the horses, they learned that the Signor had not been there. Nothing, however, was left except to mount and press on. Their way was pursued in silence, for each was full of their own thoughts. The serving man was mourning over the master he had lost—the nurse was appalled by the perils of their way and the consciousness that she had urged this step on her young lady—while Beatrice was at once agitated by her fears for her lover, by her sensitive delicacy at being without a protector, and by her dread of the insults she would have to undergo in this precarious method of travelling. But, although her maidenly scruples forbade her to mourn for her lover as openly as the serving man, her most poignant anguish arose from the conviction that she should never see him more.

Leaving the sorrowful cavalcade to pursue its way until morning, we will return to the wounded Adanta.

The night was far advanced when he opened his eyes on a small room, while, by his bedside, sat a personage attired in the garb of a leech. At first the recollection of the lover was confused, but, as fact after fact recurred to his memory, he began to be sensible of his true situation and of the failure

of his plan to rescue Beatrice. The thought soon flashed upon him that it might not yet be too late for the appointed meeting. Raising himself up in bed he turned to the leech and asked,

"Is there a gondola at your door]—I must be dressed and away. I have an appointment at midnight, and life or death depends on its fulfilment"—he would have proceeded, but here his weakness overcame him and he sank back fainting in the bed.

"Poor youth," said the leech, "he is terribly wounded, and has something on his mind. I fear this agitation will throw him into a fever. But now we must revive him," and he proceeded to apply remedies to recall the consciousness of his patient.

The lover recovered from his swoon, but only to pass into a delirious fever, which continued to rage for several days.

It was a balmy summer morning when the lover next woke to recollection. The fresh breeze—if in a crowded city the breeze ever can be fresh—was blowing through the open casement, filling the room with a perceptible fragrance, and bringing to the sick man's mind dreams of flowers and fields far away. He rose partly on one arm and looked around. At first he could not comprehend his situation, but gradually the recollection of the past broke upon him, until he was able to call up, one by one, the events which had happened on that fatal night, when he fell beneath the bravo's dagger. The last he remembered was his awakening from a swoon in this very room, and gazing on the face of a person who had seemed to be a leech. After that all was blank.

He gazed around the room, hoping to see some person who might satisfy his curiosity respecting the length of time which had elapsed during his sickness, but he gazed in vain. The apartment appeared to contain no living being beside himself. Exhausted, at length, by weakness, he sank back on

the bed, and was lost in thought as to the fate of Beatrice. Had the week of delay which her uncle had granted expired, and was she now the bride of her hated cousin, or had she found means to escape that dreadful fate? What must have been her thoughts on that fatal night on which he received his wound, when she found that he did not join her, as arranged, at the rendezvous. Had she pursued her plan of escape alone and unaided?—and, if so, what dangers had not environed her! Perhaps she had returned to her uncle—her attempt to fly been discovered—and the union hurried on by her stern relative in the recesses of his palace. If so—what misery would be hers—what remorse would attend her lover for having been the cause, although innocently, of such a fate! These thoughts rushed through the lover's mind until his brain began to give way beneath them, and he was fain to shut his eyes and endeavor to divert his mind. But the effort was in vain. He could not divest himself of a thousand fears respecting Beatrice, which haunted him like spectres. Had this uncertainty continued much longer the yet weak brain of the sick man must have given way beneath the excitement; but luckily, at this moment, the door opened and a person advanced into the room. The lover hastily turned his head, he thought he recognized the intruder, and in the moment all doubt was removed by the stranger rushing forward with a cry of joy.

"Glory to St Mark!" said the gondolier, for the intruder was no other than the faithful servant of Adanta, "glory to all the saints in the calendar, you are in your senses once more! I told the wretches that you would recover—I knew it, I felt it Ah! my good master, you will yet live to rejoin the sweet Lady Beatrice," and overcome by his joy, the warm-hearted follower shed tears. His master was equally affected.

"But tell me," said Adanta, "you spoke of Beatrice. Have you heard of her!—is she safe!—has she been forced into that hateful marriage!"

"Ah! I forget—the leech told me not to agitate you; but how can I, when my joy at your recovery is so great"

" But Beatrice!" interposed the lover.

" She is well—she has escaped—she is out of the territories of Venice, she has sought the refuge of a convent—this is all I can tell you now, and the leech would never forgive me, if he thought I had exchanged more than a single word with you. There, compose yourself. my dear master. Everything is in the right train; and tomorrow, when you are stronger, you shall know all."

Adanta would fain have insisted on hearing at once the whole story in detail from the lips of his faithful servant, but his head had already begun to swim around, and he felt that he was over-tasking his yet enfeebled powers. He was forced, therefore, to stifle his curiosity for the present and rest contented with the assurance that Beatrice was safe and free from her uncle's tyranny. With this consoling hope he lay back on his pillow, and, while his faithful servant watched over him, gradually sunk into slumber.

The next day the leech visited him on awaking and pronounced him wonderfully strengthened. As soon as the leech had retired the gondolier began, according to promise, his story. With all that happened up to the commencement of the night-march of the fugitives the reader is already acquainted; so we shall not repeat the gondolier's narration up to that time, but give his story of the adventures that afterward befell them.

" We pursued our way until we had left the territories of Venice," said the gondolier, " when, fearing that her uncle might track her progress and overtake her before she could reach Rome, the Lady Beatrice resolved to take refuge in the convent of our mother, on the road to the eternal city. She came to this determination the sooner because she would not proceed without a protector. There I left her and her nurse and returned to Venice. For two days I wandered up and down the city seeking you, but without success. At length I obtained a clue to your retreat, and finally gained

admittance to you at this house, the residence of the leech who bore you home after your wound. More than a week has elapsed, and during that time you have lain insensible or raving in a delirium. But now you have past the crisis—God be praised!

"I have heard but this morning from the convent where the Lady Beatrice has taken refuge. The nurse and her mistress are still there, but the Duke has discovered their residence. So long, however, as they continue under the shelter of the consecrated walls he dare not make any attempt on their liberty, but the moment they should attempt to resume their journey he would, in defiance of everything, seize on them and bear them back to Venice. If once here no power could save the Lady Beatrice from becoming the bride of his nephew."

"You are right," interposed the lover, "oh! would that I were well, that to-morrow I might set forth to their rescue!"

"But while they continue in the convent they are safe, therefore why need you chafe at your illness? Stay here, dear master," said the honest follower, "until you have fully recovered your strength, and then you can act all the better in your attempt to rescue the sweet Lady Beatrice."

The arguments of the gondolier finally prevailed over the impatience of the lover, and it was arranged that the servant should set forth, on the morrow, to the convent, to acquaint the Lady Beatrice with the convalescence of her lover, and tell her that, as soon as his recovered strength would permit, he would join her and be her escort to Rome.

A few weeks later and a gallant cavalcade was drawn up at the gate of the convent of "Our Mother," whose ruins may be seen on the great road leading from Venice to Rome. The cavalcade consisted, for the most part, of armed horsemen, but among steeds of stouter form might be seen one or two palfreys such as, in that day, were used by monks and ladies. At the

door of the convent stood a knight, with the lady abbess at his side and a fair form which, even shrouded as it was in a long veil, the reader would have recognized as that of the Lady Beatrice. One or two female attendants and an elderly gentleman attired as the servant of a noble family completed the group.

" And now, my dear charge," said the abbess, addressing Lady Beatrice, "farewell! May the blessing of God go with you, my child. Since you sought the refuge of these walls I have learned to love you as I have loved none save my poor niece who has, I trust, been a saint in heaven these many years. I commit you to the charge of the worthy steward whom your aunt, in answer to your letter, has sent to conduct you to Rome—not forgetting to recommend you, though that I need not do, to the care of the good knight, the Lord Adanta. And now, farewell again—God and the saints be with you."

The two ladies embraced, the abbess once more gave them her benediction, and then the cavalcade set forward.

They proceeded sometime in silence. At length the knight, who had been hitherto engaged in marshalling his forces, rode up to the side of the Lady Beatrice. The nurse, with whom she was conversing, fell back, and was soon engaged in recounting for the hundredth time to the steward their escape from Venice, while the lover spoke in those low tones, which love ever assumes, to his mistress.

"But tell me," said the Lady Beatrice at length, " why come you here with this title and array; for since your hasty arrival this morning you have done nothing but persuade the abbess and my aunt's steward that we should set forth to-day—and so I have had no chance to hear you unravel this mystery."

" It is soon done, sweet one," said the knight, with the gay laugh of happiness, " for, on arising from my bed of illness I found that my cousin, whose heir you know I was, had died. So I came into possession of his

estates at once, and well was it that I did; for it put me in possession of a good body of retainers with whom to guard you to Rome."

" Why—is there any peril, think you?" said Beatrice anxiously, " Surely my uncle would not think of seizing me by force, and from what other person can we expect danger?"

" Ah! dearest, you know him not, much as you have been persecuted by him. Think you that the man who would set an assassin on me to take my life, would hesitate to seize you by main force especially when he is, by the will of your father, your personal guardian."

"But my father never dreamed that the Duke, my own mother's brother, would treat me thus—he never intended me to be the ward of so bad a man."

"True, true, but think you the Duke would split hairs about right and wrong if he had you once more in Venice with the law on his side. Trust it not, sweet one,—he would then take right, law, and everything in his own hands. Ah!" he exclaimed, suddenly rising in his stirrups to look over the brow of a hill a short distance in advance, " by St. Mark! what do I see? Ho! there," he continued, shouting rapidly and violently, " a foe—a foe. Form men, form—place the ladies in the rear. Rest your lances, brave hearts, and be ready for the recreants."

The very first ejaculation of the knight had been followed by the appearance of an armed force on the brow of the hill, and before he ceased speaking it was evident that the insignia of the Vivaldo family were borne in the front of the troop, and that the intentions of the strangers were hostile. The Lady Beatrice and her women were instantly hurried to the rear of the knight's cavalcade, and preparations made to meet the foe. The armed condottieri—for such were the kind of troops led by the Duke—gave their foes no breathing time, but ere the little band of Adanta could well arrange its front,

dashed down the hill. Luckily there was a level space of some extent betwixt the knight's force and the foot of the hill. He suffered the foe accordingly to descend the acclivity before he moved; but as soon as the condottieri had gained the plain, he shouted,

" Charge—for God and St. Mark—ho! have at them," and levelling his long lance, while his men-at-arms followed his example, he dashed at full gallop to meet the foe. The shock of the meeting squadrons was like that of an earthquake. For a minute nothing could be seen but the clouds of dust in which the combatants were involved; but the anxious females and their little guard could plainly distinguish, amid the ringing of steel and the shrieks of the wounded, the shouts of the respective leaders. At length the fight seemed receding, and after one or two desperate stands the forces of the assailants were seen retreating over the hill. In less than ten minutes the knight and his followers returned from the chase, and riding up to the Lady Beatrice and her attendants, he said,

"The day is won, at least for the present. The knaves have been as you[^] sec, driven to a base retreat. But how many more ambuscades they may prepare for us there is no telling, so we had best push on and that right sharply too. Although had I not charge of you, dear Beatrice, I would chase the villains to the very shores of Venice."

The cavalcade was about setting forth again, when one of the men-at-arms approached.

"The fellow whom you took prisoner, my lord," he said, " has confessed that the Duke has had spies for a month to watch the convent, with the intention of taking prisoner the lady as soon as she should leave the protection of its walls."

"The double-dyed villain!" ejaculated the knight.

"What shall we do with the prisoner, my lord?" asked the man after a pause.

" Scourge the wretch and let him go."

The troop now pushed forward, but any one who had looked toward the rear would have seen that the retainers of the knight did not forget his command, but that, amid the laughter of the bold followers, the prisoner and traitor received his deserts.

As they passed the field where the conflict had lately taken place, and where two or three of the enemy lay mortally wounded or dead, Beatrice turned away with a shudder. The knight saw it and hurried forward the troop, but said nothing.

Then journey was thenceforth pursued without molestation, and the aunt of our heroine soon welcomed her to Rome.

The circumstances of the lover had meanwhile been greatly altered since the day when he parted from the Lady Beatrice at the Duke's summer palace on the Brenta. Then Adanta was but a poor scholar, or at most only a needy adventurer—now he was possessed of large estates, a title, and followed by an array of retainers. His pride no longer prevented him from a union with Beatrice, and with the consent of her aunt, her only relative except the Duke, they were united. Our hero wore, at the ceremony, the armor in which he had defended Beatrice; for such was her request; while his gallant retainers stood around, under the same banner which they had so nobly borne in the fray.

